



LATEST NEWS

Peace Process Update

Uncertainty about U.S. policy in Afghanistan has many in the country worried about the prospects for peace as Taliban violence spikes to its highest levels in over a decade. Taliban insurgents are attacking Afghan troops and police in nearly every province. At the same time there have been an unprecedented number of targeted killings in Kabul and other major cities against those that embody the spirit of a free and democratic Afghan society, including many females but also male journalists, activists, government employees, and most recently, two female Supreme Court justices.

As negotiating teams from the Afghan government and the Taliban insurgents resume peace talks in Doha, the need for U.S. leadership and commitment to a sustainable peace process has never been greater. The Afghan Parliament's role in the peace process is to be an honest broker for the Afghan people. The Afghan people want a full ceasefire, and they want a sustainable peace agreement. The constitution grants Parliament the authority to ratify a future peace agreement and they will only do so if it preserves the constitution, democratic institutions, rights and freedoms for women, children, minority groups, and civil society.

Afghanistan's FY21 Budget Update

Tensions are running high between the Parliament and the Ghani Administration after the Parliament rejected the administration's proposed budget twice in as many weeks when the administration failed to address repeated concerns from the Speaker of Parliament and other MP's. This showdown over the budget comes on the heels of Parliament rejecting four of the President's ministerial appointments and his appointment for Central Bank Governor. The President has responded by rejecting Parliament's authority, refusing to meaningfully engage on the budget, refusing to replace the acting Ministers and Central Bank Governor, and launching personal attacks in the media against MP's and the institution of Parliament.

The Speaker of Parliament has stated his intent to delay Parliament's winter break if a budget agreement cannot be reached also noting that the FY20 budget includes a continuing resolution provision to keep the government funded until the FY21 budget is approved. Parliament has many concerns about the administration's budget, among them:

- Unbalanced budget
- Fails to provide an equal pay scale for government workers

- Allocates government funds to the provinces in a discriminatory fashion
- Lack of transparency on how U.S. and allied donor funds have been spent in 2020 and will be spent in 2021, including for the National Dinner Table Program
- Allows President Ghani to continue using emergency government funds for expenses such as salaries, homes, and vehicles for his own political consultants
- Allows President Ghani to continue operating an illegal procurement department, spending emergency funds on operational expenses and supplies for the security ministries, without their input or approval
- Omits many development projects of national importance that are partially funded and underway, including the elimination of the Rural Road Construction program

DPPC Applauds Congressional Passage of FY21 NDAA

Congress passed the Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) on January 1 that included provisions from the Cheney-Crow Amendment to block a rapid drawdown of American troops from Afghanistan. The NDAA measure allows Congress to withhold funding for further troop cuts unless the Pentagon, State Department, and Director of National Intelligence assess how a drawdown could impact U.S. national security, Afghan women's rights, and other important criteria. According to the legislation, the assessment is required before troop numbers drop below 4,000 and again before the numbers drop below 2,000.

Congressional support of systematic policy for U.S. engagement in Afghanistan is critical to protect joint U.S.- Afghan national security interests, promote a sustainable peace process, and preserve the gains of the past 19 years, including legal protections for women, children and minority groups, a free press, civil society, universal education, and a representative government.

ABOUT US

The Afghanistan-U.S. Democratic Peace and Prosperity Council (DPPC) is an organization dedicated to furthering a long-term alliance, forged in a strong mutual commitment to shared ideals, between Afghans and Americans.

Based in Washington, D.C., the DPPC promotes policies to ensure a sustainable peace process, strong democratic institutions, women's and children's rights, anti-corruption, good governance, and economic development. The DPPC's mission is to support legislation and policies that provide a better future for young Afghans and helps the reformers in Afghanistan Parliament to move the country along the path to self-sufficiency.

STAY IN TOUCH

The DPPC is hopeful about the future of Afghanistan and its relationship with the United States. We ask those that share our hope to learn more about us and our mission at www.thedppc.com.

THE AFGHANISTAN - U.S. DEMOCRATIC PEACE AND PROSPERITY COUNCIL

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